WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A mute apparatus comprising:

a plurality of mute operation switches each operative to assume two operation states consisting of a mute-on state and a mute-off state;

a mute executing switch operative to assume two executing states consisting of a mute-on state and a mute-off state;

mute switch control data generating means for generating mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches;

control data determining means for determining whether said mute executing switch is to assume said mute-on or mute-off state on the basis of said mute switch control data elements; and

mute switch control means for having said mute executing switch selectively assume said mute-on and mute-off states on the basis of said mute-on or mute-off state determined by said control data determining means.

2. A mute apparatus as set forth in claim 1, further comprising switch state display means for selectively displaying said mute-on and mute-off states of said mute operation switches on the basis of said mute switch control data elements generated by said mute switch control data generating means.

3. A mute apparatus as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

mute switch control data storing means for storing said mute switch control data elements; and

mute switch control data operation means for performing an operation between said mute switch control data elements generated by said mute switch control data generating means and said mute switch control data elements currently stored in said mute switch control data storing means to generate mute switch control data elements;

whereby said mute switch control data storing means is operated to store said mute switch control data elements obtained as a result of said operation performed by said mute switch control data operation means, and said control data determining means is operated to determine whether said mute executing switch is to assume said mute-on or mute-off state on the basis of said mute switch control data elements obtained as a result of said operation

performed by said mute switch control data operation means.

4. A mute apparatus as set forth in claim 3, further comprising switch state display means for selectively displaying said mute-on and mute-off states of said mute operation switches on the basis of said mute switch control data elements generated by said mute switch control data generating means.

5. A mute apparatus as set forth in claim 3, further comprising an operation setting switch operative to assume two operation states consisting of a mute-on state and a mute-off state, in which said mute switch control data generating means is operated to generate mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches and said operation setting switch, and said mute switch control data operation means is constituted by:

an AND operation unit for performing an AND operation between said mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches generated by said mute switch control data generating means and said mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches stored in said mute switch control data storing means;

an OR operation unit for performing an OR operation between said mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches generated by said mute switch control data generating means, and said mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches stored in said mute switch control data storing means;

a selecting unit for selecting said operation from among said AND operation performed by said AND operation unit and said OR operation performed by said OR operation unit on the basis of said mute switch control data elements generated by said mute switch control data generating means; and

an operation switching unit for selectively switching to said AND operation unit and said OR operation unit on the basis of said operation selected by said selecting unit.

6. A mute apparatus as set forth in claim 5, further comprising switch state display means for selectively displaying said mute-on and mute-off states of said mute operation switches on the basis of said mute switch control data elements generated by said mute switch control data generating means.

7. A mute method comprising the steps of:

(a) having mute operation switches selectively assume two operation states consisting of a mute-on state and a mute-off state;

(b) generating mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches;

(c) determining whether a mute executing switch is to assume said mute-on or mute-off state on the basis of said mute switch control data elements generated in the step (b); and

(d) having said mute executing switch selectively assume the mute-on and mute-off states on the basis of said mute-on or mute-off state determined in the step (c).

8. A mute method as set forth in claim 7, further comprising the step of:

(e) selectively displaying said mute-on and mute-off states of said mute operation switches on the basis of said mute switch control data elements generated in the step (b).

9. A mute method as set forth in claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

(f) storing said mute switch control data elements; and

(g) performing an operation between said mute switch control data elements generated in the step (b) and said mute switch control data elements currently stored in the step (f) to generate mute switch control data elements;

whereby the step (f) has the step of storing said mute switch control data elements obtained as a result of said operation performed in the step (g), and the step (c) has the step of determining whether said mute executing switch is to assume said mute-on or mute-off state on the basis of said mute switch control data elements obtained as a result of said operation performed in the step (g).

10. A mute method as set forth in claim 9, further comprising the step of:

(h) selectively displaying said mute-on and mute-off states of said mute operation switches on the basis of said mute switch control data elements generated in the step (b).

11. A mute method as set forth in claim 9, in which said step (a) has the step of having an operation setting switch selectively assume two operation states consisting of a mute-on state and a mute-off state, said step (b) has the step of generating mute switch control data

elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches and said operation setting switch, and said step (g) includes the steps of:

(g1) performing an AND operation between said mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches generated in the step (b) and said mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches stored in the step (f);

(g2) performing an OR operation between said mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches generated in the step (b), and said mute switch control data elements indicative of said operation states of said mute operation switches stored in the step (f);

(g3) selecting said operation step from among the step (g1) and the step (g2) on the basis of said mute switch control data elements generated in the step (b); and

(g4) selectively switching to said step (g1) and said step (g2) on the basis of said operation selected in said step (g3).

12. A mute method as set forth in claim 11, further comprising the step of:

(i) selectively displaying said mute-on and mute-off states of said mute operation switches on the basis of said mute switch control data elements generated in the step (b).